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ABSTRACT

The National Adult Literacy Initiative calls for a collaborative effort among the public, private, voluntary, and military sectors to address more effectively illiteracy through adult education. One of the first points in the initiative calls for continued educational services funded by the federal government and administered by the states. Other key aspects of the initiative include the provision of funding for a national awareness campaign and for follow-up mechanisms designed to recruit literacy volunteers and to encourage private sector funding of literacy efforts; development of the National Adult Literacy Project to identify exemplary programs and disseminate information on them; involvement of high school and college students in literacy programs using college work study funds and student volunteer programs; and expansion of existing networks and creation of new linkages among special, vocational, and adult educators and rehabilitative service providers. To support further the objectives of the Adult Literacy Initiative, the Department of Education is establishing the Federal Employee Literacy Training Program (FELT) to provide a cadre of federal employee literacy volunteers and to secure space for literacy tutoring. In addition, the department is establishing liaison with volunteer and service groups in an ongoing field outreach and input system. (MN)

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SECRETARY'S INITIATIVE ON ADULT LITERACY
SPEECH DELIVERED TO

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THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION FOR ADULT AND CONTINUING EDUCATION

DECEMBER 2, 1983

DIANE WELCH VINES

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TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

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THANK YOU FOR THE KIND INTRODUCTION. I AM HERE THIS AFTERNOON TO TALK ABOUT THE NATIONAL ADULT LITERACY INITIATIVE. SOME OF YOU HAVE BEEN VERY INVOLVED IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE INITIATIVE--FOR YOU THIS WILL BE REPETITIOUS.

OTHERS OF YOU MAY HAVE ONLY HEARD ABOUT THE INITIATIVE AND FOR SOME OF YOU THIS MAY BE COMPLETELY NEW. I WILL TRY TO PRESENT AN OVERVIEW OF THE INITIATIVE FOR THOSE OF YOU WHO ARE LESS FAMILIAR WITH THE DETAILS AND THEN UPDATE THOSE PEOPLE WHO MAY HAVE A GREAT DEAL OF INFORMATION ON CERTAIN ASPECTS OF THE EFFORT.

I WILL THEN ATTEMPT TO PLACE THE INITIATIVE IN THE CONTEXT OF WHAT YOU ARE TRYING TO ACCOMPLISH HERE.

ON SEPTEMBER 7, PRESIDENT REAGAN RECOGNIZED THE ADULT LITERACY INITIATIVE IN A CEREMONY AT THE WHITE HOUSE WITH OVER 200 OF THE NATIONAL LEADERS IN ADULT EDUCATION, LITERACY ORGANIZATIONS, THE PRIVATE SECTOR, THE VOLUNTEER SECTOR, AND GOVERNMENT. HE STRESSED THE IMPORTANCE OF A UNITED EFFORT AND SAID:

> IN THIS DECADE, AMERICA FACES SERIOUS CHALLENGES ON MANY FRONTS: TO OUR NATIONAL SECURITY, OUR ECONOMIC PROSPERITY, AND OUR ABILITY TO COMPETE IN THE INTERANTIONAL MARKETPLACE. IF WE'RE TO RENEW OUR ECONOMY, PROTECT OUR FREEDOM, WE MUST SHARPEN THE SKILLS OF EVERY AMERICAN MIND AND ENLARGE THE POTENTIAL OF EVERY INDIVIDUAL AMERICAN LIFE. UNFORTUNATELY, THE HIDDEN PROBLEM OF ADULT ILLITERACY HOLDS BACK TOO MANY OF OUR CITIZENS, AND AS A NATION, WE TOO, PAY A PRICE.

FOR SECRETARY BELL AND BARBARA BUSH, THIS WAS A GRATIFYING THRUST FORWARD FOR A LONG-STANDING CONCERN ABOUT ADULTS UNABLE TO READ, WRITE AND COMPUTE AT A LEVEL WHICH IS FUNCTIONAL IN AN ADVANCED SOCIETY SUCH AS OURS.

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SECRETARY BELL DISPLAYED HIS CONCERN ABOUT "FUNCTIONAL LITERACY" OR "FUNCTIONAL COMPETENCE" WHEN HE WAS THE COMMISSIONER OF EDUCATION. SECRETARY BELL HAS ENORMOUS RESPECT FOR PAUL DELKER, OUR CURRENT DIRECTOR OF ADULT EDUCATION WHO MANY OR MOST OF YOU KNOW FOR HIS CONTINUING ATTEMPTS TO FOCUS NATIONAL ATTENTION ON THIS PROBLEM.

BARBARA BUSH CHOSE READING AND LITERACY IN ADULTS AND CHILDREN AS HER PROJECT WHILE SHE IS THE SECOND LADY. SHE BRINGS A TREMENDOUS GOOD-WILL AND ENERGY TO GROUPS ACROSS THE COUNTRY AS SHE PERFORMS WHAT SHE DESCRIBES AS HER "CHEERLEADING" ROLE.

BOTH MRS. BUSH AND SECRETARY BELL WERE DRAWN INTO A NEW JOINT LOOK AT ADULT FUNCTIONAL LITERACY BY TESTIFYING BEFORE A CONGRESSIONAL SUB-COMMITTEE. THEY WERE THEN A PART OF SEVERAL BREAKFAST MEETINGS INVOLVING LEADERS OF CONGRESS, JUDY KOLOSKI IN HER CAPACITY AS THE CONGRESSIONAL LIAISON FOR THE STATE DIRECTORS OF ADULT EDUCATION, PETER WAITE AND JOHN EGGERT AS LEADERS OF MAJOR VOLUNTEER LITERACY ORGANIZATIONS, ROBERT WEDGEWORTH AND JEAN COLEMAN OF THE AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION, AND GENE WHAPLES AS YOUR REPRESENTATIVE, LEADERS OF THE INTERNATIONAL READING ASSOCIATION, B. DALTON BOOKSELLERS AND LEADERS OF THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION.

DR. ROBERT WORTHINGTON, ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE OFFICE OF VOCATIONAL AND ADULT EDUCATION AND DR. JOHN WU, HIS DEPUTY AND AN ADULT EDUCATOR HIMSELF, WERE VERY ACTIVE IN THESE DISCUSSIONS.

CORDIAL BUT HEATED DISCUSSIONS ABOUT POSSIBLE APPROACHES TO THE PROBLEM RESULTED IN THE PRESIDENT'S ENDORSEMENT OF A MULTI-PRONGED APPROACH WHICH WOULD CALL ON AN INTERDEPARTMENTAL, INTRADEPARTMENTAL, PUBLIC/PRIVATE/VOLUNTEER EFFORT WHICH WOULD DRAW UPON THE ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF THE PAST, REQUIRE COOPERATION TO AVOID DUPLICATION OF EFFORT, AND ENCOURAGE PARTICIPATION FROM THE PRIVATE SECTOR.

THE INITIATIVE RECOGNIZED THE INVALUABLE ENORMOUS CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE STATE-ADMINISTERED, FEDERALLY-FUNDED ADULT EDUCATION PROGRAMS, THE

VOLUNTEER GROUPS, AND BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY PROGRAMS. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION EFFORTS ARE DIRECTED AT EXPANDING EXISTING PROGRAMS AND ENCOURAGING DEVELOPMENT OF NEW PROGRAMS.

IT WAS CLEAR FROM THE INFORMATION PRESENTED THAT WE ARE JUST ABOUT HOLDING EVEN ON THE PROBLEM OF ADULT ILLITERACY. CONSERVATIVE ESTIMATES ARE THAT 23 MILLION AMERICANS, ONE IN FIVE, ARE FUNCTIONALLY ILLITERATE, A STATISTIC THAT INCLUDES MEN AND WOMEN OF EVERY RACE, RELIGION AND ECONOMIC STATUS AND EVERY REGION OF THE COUNTRY. THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE ENTERING THE POOL OF PEOPLE NEEDING SERVICES, WHICH IS ESTIMATED TO BE 2.3 MILLION ANNUALLY, IS APPROXIMATELY EQUAL TO THOSE CURRENTLY RECEIVING SERVICES. THOSE ENTERING THE POOL ARE APPROXIMATELY AS FOLLOWS:

- 400,000 LEGAL IMMIGRANTS
- 100,000 - 150,000 REFUGEES
- 800,000 ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS
- 850,000 HIGH SCHOOL DROP-OUTS
- 100,000 - 150,000 "PUSH-OUTS"

ADULT ILLITERACY AFFECTS FUTURE GENERATIONS AS WELL. AS A RESULT OF THE STUDY ON EDUCATION AND SOCIETY, IT IS ESTIMATED THAT TWO ADDITIONAL YEARS OF SCHOOLING FOR A PARENT RESULTS IN 1.1 ADDITIONAL YEARS OF SCHOOLING FOR THE CHILD. FURTHER, FUNCTIONALLY ILLITERATE PARENTS PROBABLY CANNOT HELP THEIR CHILDREN WITH HOMEWORK OR SET AN EXAMPLE OF THE IMPORTANCE OF READING AND COMPUTING.

FEDERAL INVOLVEMENT IN ADULT BASIC AND SECONDARY EDUCATION IS RELATIVELY NEW - THE LEGISLATION WAS PART OF THE ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY ACT OF 1964. IN 1965, WHEN THE PROGRAM WAS FIRST OPERABLE, ONLY 14 STATES WERE ABLE TO GET STATE PLANS APPROVED AND COMMENCE LOCAL PROGRAMS. ONLY 37,000 ADULT STUDENTS WERE SERVED THAT FIRST YEAR.

IN 1965 LESS THAN A DOZEN STATES HAD VIABLE PROGRAMS AND IDENTIFIABLE ADULT EDUCATION LEADERSHIP AT THE STATE LEVEL WHEN FEDERAL FUNDS BECAME AVAILABLE.

IN 1965 ONLY ABOUT 14 MAJOR INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCTION CONFERRED THE DOCTORAL DEGREE IN ADULT EDUCATION AND NONE OF THESE INSTITUTIONS FOCUSED ON ADULT BASIC EDUCATION. LESS THAT 500 PEOPLE HAD EARNED THAT DEGREE. NOW MORE THAN 100 INSTITUTIONS CONFER ADVANCED DEGREES TO AN INCREASING NUMBER OF ADULT EDUCATION SCHOLARS AND PRACTITIONERS.

NOW ALL 50 STATES AND THE INSULAR AREAS PARTICIPATE IN PROGRAMS UNDER THE ADULT EDUCATION ACT. JUST 17 YEARS LATER, EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES HAVE BEEN MADE AVAILABLE TO AN ESTIMATED 20 MILLION EDUCATIONALLY DISADVANTAGED ADULTS. THE CURRENT LEVEL OF PARTICIPATION IS APPROXIMATELY 2 MILLION A YEAR.

AT THE SAME TIME, THE STATE AND LOCAL CONTRIBUTIONS TO ADULT EDUCATION HAVE GROWN FROM ESSENTIALLY A ZERO CONTRIBUTION TO BEING APPROXIMATELY EQUAL OR GREATER THAN THE FEDERAL CONTRIBUTION.

OTHER FEDERAL AGENCIES ALSO ADMINISTER PROGRAMS TO ASSIST IN THE FIGHT AGAINST FUNCTIONAL ILLITERACY. SOME EXAMPLES ARE -- DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE -- BASIC SKILLS INSTRUCTION FOR OVER 220,000 STUDENTS AT A COST OF $55 MILLION FOR STUDENT SALARIES AND $15.5 MILLION FOR INSTRUCTION AND MATERIALS. OFFICE OF REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT, $3.4 MILLION. VETERANS ADMINISTRATION, GI BILL FOR INSTRUCTION THROUGH THE SECONDARY SCHOOL LEVEL, $26.8 MILLION.

THUS, WHILE OUR ACHIEVEMENTS ARE NOTEWORTHY, WE APPEAR TO BE ONLY HOLDING STEADY ON THE PERCENTAGE OF ADULTS WHO ARE FUNCTIONALLY ILLITERATE. WE ARE JUST ABOUT TAKING CARE OF THE INCREASE EACH YEAR.

THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COSTS OF ADULT FUNCTIONAL ILLITERACY ARE HIGH: APPROXIMATELY 40 PERCENT OF ALL MINORITY YOUTH MAY BE FUNCTIONALLY ILLITERATE; AS MANY AS 25 MILLION WORKING AMERICANS, OR 15 PERCENT OF THE WORKFORCE MAY BE FUNCTIONALLY ILLITERATE. THIS PROBABLY MEANS THAT MILLIONS OF DOLLARS ARE WASTED ANNUALLY IN TERMS OF CLERICAL ERRORS, PRODUCTION WASTE, AND INDUSTRIAL ACCIDENTS.

THERE IS A DIRECT CORRELATION BETWEEN ILLITERACY AND CRIME WHICH IS A FURTHER DRAG ON THE NATION'S ECONOMY AND STRUCTURE. CENSUS DATA INDICATES THAT THE LEVEL OF EARNED INCOME IS GREATER WITH A GREATER EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT, EVEN FOR THOSE HOLDING THE SAME JOB.

A DISPROPORTIONATE NUMBER OF FUNCTIONAL ILLITERATE ADULTS IS FOUND ON THE PUBLIC ASSISTANCE ROLLS.

THE PROPORTION OF PERSONS WITH FEWER THAN SIX GRADES OF SCHOOL ON PUBLIC ASSISTANCE IS MORE THAN DOUBLE THAT AMONG THOSE WITH SIX TO EIGHT YEARS AND ALMOST FOUR TIMES THAT AMONG THOSE WITH NINE TO ELEVEN YEARS OF SCHOOL. WITH REGARD TO CRIME AND ITS RELATED COST INCLUDING IMPRISONMENT, LOST INCOME OF THE PRISONER, LAW ENFORCEMENT AND COURT COSTS, AND WELFARE EXPENDITURES TO THE PRISONER'S FAMILY; THIS NATION IN 1970 SPENT AN ESTIMATED $10.4 BILLION. AT LEAST IN PART, THIS EXPENDITURE IS RELATED TO INADEQUATE EDUCATION.

OUR OBJECTIVE NOW IS TO FOSTER A COLLABORATIVE EFFORT AMONG THE PUBLIC, PRIVATE, VOLUNTARY, AND MILITARY SECTORS IN MORE EFFECTIVELY ADDRESSING ILLITERACY THROUGH ADULT EDUCATION. WE ARE CONFIDENT THAT A NATIONALLY COORDINATED ATTACK ON THE PROBLEM OF ADULT ILLITERACY WILL BRING NOTICEABLE RESULTS BY 1990.

AND NOW FOR AN OVERVIEW AND UPDATE ON SOME OF THE SPECIFICS OF THE ADULT LITERACY INITIATIVE. FIRST, AND VERY IMPORTANT, IS THE CONTINUED ADULT EDUCATION SERVICES FUNDED BY THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT AND ADMINISTERED BY THE STATES. IN 1981, ABOUT 2.3 MILLION MEN AND WOMEN, 16 YEARS OF AGE AND OVER, WERE ENROLLED IN STATE ADMINISTERED ADULT BASIC EDUCATION PROGRAMS. OUT-OF-SCHOOL YOUTH AGED 16-24 MADE UP OVER 42 PERCENT OF PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS, AND FOUR-FIFTHS OF ALL PARTICIPANTS WERE AGED 16 TO 45. IN FY 84, THE FUNDING LEVEL IS $95 MILLION. MOST PROGRAMS REPORT THAT THE PROGRAM MORE THAN PAYS FOR ITSELF IN INCREASED REVENUE. FOR EXAMPLE:

UNDER THE ADULT EDUCATION ACT (P.L. 91-230), in 1980:

- o 90,000 PARTICIPANTS OBTAINED NEW JOBS
- o 55,000 PARTICIPANTS WERE PROMOTED
- o 115,000 PARTICIPANTS ENROLLED IN OTHER TRAINING COURSES
- o 35,000 PARTICIPANTS LEFT PUBLIC ASSISTANCE ROLLS
- o 25,000 PARTICIPANTS REGISTERED TO VOTE
- o 12,000 PARTICIPANTS BECAME U.S. CITIZENS
- o 400,000 LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENT ADULTS ENROLLED IN ADULT EDUCATION

IN ADDITION, UNDER THE VOCATIONAL EDUCATION ACT, IN FY 1983 ABOUT $26 MILLION WENT FOR BASIC SKILLS AND REMEDIAL INSTRUCTION FOR ADULTS.

SECOND, THE NATIONAL AWARENESS CAMPAIGN. THE DEPARTMENT PROVIDED SOME INITIAL FUNDING TO THE COALITION FOR LITERACY TO PROMOTE A NATIONAL AWARENESS CAMPAIGN AND THE FOLLOW-UP MECHANISMS DESIGNED TO RECRUIT LITERACY VOLUNTEERS AND TO ENCOURAGE PRIVATE SECTOR FUNDING OF LITERACY EFFORTS.

THE FOLLOW-UP MECHANISMS INCLUDE AN 800 NUMBER AND A COMPUTER DATABASE AT CONTACT, INC. IN NEBRASKA, INFORMATION TO BE MAILED TO POTENTIAL VOLUNTEERS, CONTRIBUTORS AND BUSINESSES AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE INFORMATION. IT IS IMPORTANT FOR ALL PROGRAMS TO BE PREPARED FOR THE INTEREST IN LITERACY WHICH THE CAMPAIGN WILL GENERATE. THIS INCLUDES EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS FOR STUDENTS AND TUTORS, TRAINING AND ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT FOR VOLUNTEERS, AND SCREENING AND MATCHING OF VOLUNTEERS AND STUDENTS.

THE NATIONAL AWARENESS CAMPAIGN MAY BE READY WITH PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENTS AS EARLY AS MARCH OR APRIL 1984.

ANOTHER ASPECT OF THE INITIATIVE IS THE NATIONAL ADULT LITERACY PROJECT THROUGH THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION. THIS PROJECT WILL IDENTIFY EXEMPLARY LITERACY PROGRAMS AND DISSEMINATE INFORMATION ON PROGRAMS, EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS AND METHODS. IT WILL ALSO IDENTIFY GAPS IN RESEARCH ON LITERACY AND MAKE POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS. THE PROJECT HAS BEGUN ITS WORK.

THE CONFERENCE ON LITERACY PLANNED BY THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION HAS BEEN POSTPONED UNTIL JANUARY TO ALLOW PLANNING WITH THE NATIONAL ADULT LITERACY PROJECT. WE ARE HOPING TO DO A SATELLITE TELECONFERENCE OF THIS WORKING CONFERENCE THROUGH OUR OFFICE OF EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH AND IMPROVEMENT AND THE NATIONAL DIFFUSION NETWORK SO THAT MORE SERVICE PROVIDER GROUPS CAN BE INCLUDED AT THE MORE LOCAL, WORKING LEVEL.

OUR OFFICE OF INTERGOVERNMENTAL AND INTERAGENCY AFFAIRS WILL CONTINUE TO ENCOURAGE STATE AND LOCAL LITERACY EFFORTS THROUGH NATIONAL AND REGIONAL ASSOCIATIONS, CONFERENCES AND MEETINGS OF GOVERNORS, STATE LEGISLATORS AND MAYORS AND BY CONTACTS WITH GOVERNORS' OFFICES DIRECTLY. THE DEPARTMENT WILL ALSO CONTINUE TO ENCOURAGE INTEREST IN STATE LEGISLATORS AND OTHER STATE AND LOCAL OFFICIALS. MANY OF YOU ARE ALREADY INVOLVED IN THIS EFFORT AND WE HOPE YOU WILL TELL US IF WE CAN BE HELPFUL TO YOU IN ANY WAY. AN INTERESTING EXAMPLE OF A PROMISING NON-FEDERAL EFFORT IS THE NEW INDIANA LITERACY INITIATIVE.

ANOTHER IMPORTANT ASPECT OF THE LITERACY INITIATIVE IS THE INVOLVEMENT OF STUDENTS, BOTH HIGH SCHOOL AND COLLEGE, IN LITERACY PROGRAMS.

THERE ARE SEVERAL WAYS STUDENTS CAN BECOME INVOLVED. THE FIRST IS THE PARTICIPATION OF COLLEGE WORK-STUDY STUDENTS. 18 COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES HAVE BEEN SELECTED TO CARRY OUT A DEMONSTRATION PROGRAM THAT WILL EMPLOY COLLEGE WORK-STUDY STUDENTS IN ADULT LITERACY PROGRAMS.

COLLEGE WORK-STUDY PROGRAMS, FUNDED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AT $590 MILLION FOR THE 1983-84 SCHOOL YEAR, PROVIDE JOBS FOR STUDENTS WHO NEED FINANCIAL AID TO HELP PAY FOR THEIR EDUCATION.

PARTICIPATING INSTITUTIONS WILL MANAGE THE ADULT EDUCATION ACTIVITIES, PAYING THE STUDENTS FROM COLLEGE WORK-STUDY FUNDS. THEY ARE:

- AUGSBURG COLLEGE, MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA
- BOSTON UNIVERSITY, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS

- COLLEGE OF ST. THOMAS, ST. PAUL, MINNESOTA
- COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY, NEW YORK, NEW YORK
- COMMUNITY COLLEGE OF DELAWARE COUNTY, MEDIA, PENNSYLVANIA
- KANSAS NEWMAN COLLEGE, WICHITA, KANSAS
- LAREDO JUNIOR COLLEGE, LAREDO, TEXAS
- MACALESTER COLLEGE, ST. PAUL, MINNESOTA
- MIAMI-DADE COMMUNITY COLLEGE, MIAMI, FLORIDA
- MORRIS BROWN COLLEGE, ATLANTA, GEORGIA
- PORTLAND COMMUNITY COLLEGE, PORTLAND, OREGON
- SUNY-BROCKPORT, BROCKPORT, NEW YORK
- TEXAS SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY, HOUSTON, TEXAS
- TEXAS SOUTHMOST COLLEGE, BROWNSVILLE, TEXAS
- UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO-DENVER, DENVER, COLORADO
- UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS, CHICAGO, ILLINOIS
- UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA, LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA
- WAYNE STATE UNIVERSITY, DETROIT, MICHIGAN

SECRETARY BELL CALLED THE TUTORING PROGRAM "AN EXCITING AND INNOVATIVE MEANS OF UTILIZING AN UNTAPPED STUDENT RESOURCE." THE SECRETARY ALSO SAID THAT ALL OF THE 3,400 SCHOOLS PARTICIPATING IN THE COLLEGE WORK-STUDY PROGRAM WOULD BE ENCOURAGED TO DEVELOP SIMILAR WORK-STUDY PLANS.

THE PILOT INSTITUTIONS, SELECTED ON THE BASIS OF EXPERIENCE IN AND COMMITMENT TO COMBATING ADULT ILLITERACY AND FOR REPRESENTATIVENES, WILL WORK TOWARD DEVELOPING PROGRAMS WHICH CAN BE REPLICATED BY OTHER INSTITUTIONS. THIS MAY INVOLVE ON OR OFF-CAMPUS ACTIVITIES, GENERALLY IN CONJUNCTION WITH EXISTING COMMUNITY PROGRAMS. STUDENTS MAY HAVE A WIDE VARIETY OF ROLES IN SUCH PROGRAMS. THOSE OF YOU IN LITERACY PROGRAMS MAY WANT TO CONTACT YOUR LOCAL COLLEGE OR UNIVERSITY TO SEE IF THEY RECEIVE WORK-STUDY FUNDS AND, IF SO, IF THEY WOULD LIKE TO JOIN FORCES WITH YOU.

OTHER WAYS COLLEGE STUDENTS CAN BE INVOLVED ARE THROUGH LITERACY EXPERIENCES IN <u>COLLEGE CREDIT COURSES</u> AND THROUGH <u>STUDENT VOLUNTEERISM</u>. THE DEPARTMENT RECENTLY PROVIDED SOME START-UP FUNDING TO THE WASHINGTON EDUCATION PROJECT TO PROMOTE THE COLLEGE "CREDIT" CONCEPT.

WE ARE ALSO WORKING WITH COLLEGE STUDENT ASSOCIATIONS AND HIGH SCHOOL ASSOCIATIONS AND SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS TO PROMOTE SERVICE IN EXISTING LITERACY PROGRAMS.

BECAUSE OUR OBJECTIVE IS TO FOSTER THE COLLABORATIVE EFFORTS WHICH HAVE EMERGED BETWEEN THE VARIOUS GROUPS WHO HAVE A STAKE IN THIS NATIONAL EDUCATIONAL EFFORT AND TO HELP CREATE NEW ALLIANCES AMONG ALL ELEMENTS OF OUR SOCIETY, WE HAVE INCLUDED NETWORKING AS AN IMPORTANT PART OF THE INITIATIVE. MANY VALUABLE NETWORKS ALREADY EXIST; OTHERS NEED EXPANSION OR EVEN INITIATION.

ONE ASPECT OF THE NETWORKING INVOLVES INCREASING THE COMMUNICATION LINKAGES BETWEEN SPECIAL EDUCATORS, VOCATIONAL EDUCATORS, ADULT EDUCATORS AND REHABILITATION SERVICE PROVIDERS. THESE GROUPS HAVE MUCH TO OFFER TO THE LITERACY EFFORT IF WE CAN PREVENT DUPLICATION OF EFFORT AND PROMOTE COLLABORATION. OUR OFFICE OF SPECIAL EDUCATION AND REHABILATATIVE SERVICES HAS TAKEN THE LEAD IN SPONSORING A NATIONAL MEETING TO PLAN THIS NETWORKING EFFORT. OTHER CONFERENCES AND MEETINGS ARE PLANNED.

THE SECRETARY'S REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVES (S.R.R.'s) WILL BE CONVENING REGIONAL CONFERENCES TO BRING TOGETHER ALL OF THE LITERACY GROUPS, BOTH PUBLIC AND PRIVATE, IN EACH REGION. THESE CONFERENCES WILL SERVE THE PURPOSE OF INFORMATION-SHARING AND DISCUSSIONS ABOUT LITERACY ACTIVITY NEEDS ON A REGIONAL BASIS. THE NAMES OF ALL GROUPS LISTED ON THE CONTACT, INC., DATABASE WILL BE PROVIDED TO THE S.R.R.'s. THE S.R.R.'s WILL WORK CLOSELY WITH THE STATE DIRECTORS OF ADULT EDUCATION AD THE STATE VOLUNTEER GROUPS IN PLANNING THE CONFERENCES.

THE NATIONAL FORUM ON EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION WILL BE HELD DECEMBER 6, 7, AND 8 IN INDIANAPOLIS. SOME OF YOU WILL BE THERE.

SECRETARY BELL BELIEVES THAT THERE ARE STRONG CONNECTIONS BETWEEN THE LEVEL OF EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE FOR ALL LEVELS OF EDUCATION AND ADULT FUNCTIONAL LITERACY. THE NATION AT RISK REPORT BY THE PRESIDENT'S

COMMISSION ON EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION MENTIONS THE RATE OF YOUTH AND ADULT FUNCTIONAL LITERACY AS ONE INDICATION OF THE NEED FOR REFORM IN THE U.S. EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM.

AS YOU WELL KNOW, SCHOOLS HAVE BEEN CRITICIZED FOR GRADUATING LARGE NUMBERS OF FUNCTIONAL ILLITERATES. STUDIES HAVE REPORTED THAT ANYWHERE FROM 2 TO 13 PERCENT OF HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES WERE FUNCTIONALLY ILLITERATE. ALTHOUGH A GREAT DEAL OF PROGRESS HAS BEEN MADE IN THE ERADICATION OF FUNCTIONAL ILLITERACY, THE NATIONAL ASSESSMENT OF EDUCATIONAL PROGRESS STUDY OF 17 YEAR-OLDS REPORTS THAT 47% OF BLACK URBAN YOUTH ARE FUNCTIONALLY ILLITERATE. HOWEVER, ALMOST AS A COUNTERBALANCE, THE NAEP STUDY OF 9 YEAR-OLDS REPORTS THE GREATEST PROGRESS IN READING AND WRITING HAS BEEN MADE BY 9 YEAR-OLD BLACKS IN THE SOUTHEAST.

A 1978 STUDY SUPPORTED BY NIE EXAMINED ESTIMATES OF FUNCTIONAL ILLITERACY AMONG HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS AND CONCLUDED THAT LESS THAN ONE PERCENT OF HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES WERE ACTUALLY FUNCTIONALLY ILLITERATE; FIVE PERCENT (ONE IN TWENTY) OF YOUTH IN HIGH SCHOOL WERE FOUND TO BE FUNCTIONALLY ILLITERATE, BUT THEY WERE TYPICALLY STUDENTS THE SCHOOLS WERE ATTEMPTING TO SERVE IN SOME WAY--RETAINING THEM AND WORKING WITH THEM IN SPECIAL PROGRAMS.

OTHER CONNECTIONS BETWEEN THE RECENT NATIONAL FOCUS ON EXCELLENCE AND THE CONCERN FOR FUNCTIONAL LITERACY INCLUDE:

- ADULT EDUCATION IS AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE U.S. EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM, BOTH FOR IMMIGRANTS AND REFUGEES AND FOR NATIVE-BORN AMERICANS.

- THE DROP-OUT/PUSH-OUT COMPONENT OF ADULT FUNCTIONAL ILLITERACY RELATES DIRECTLY TO SECONDARY SCHOOLS.

- EFFORTS AT EXCELLENCE WILL INCREASE STANDARDS FOR HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION AND MAY INCREASE THE PUSH-OUT/DROP-OUT NUMBERS IN THE POOL.

- PARENTS WHO ARE FUNCTIONALLY ILLITERATE ARE UNABLE TO HELP THEIR CHILD ACHIEVE EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE IN THE SAME WAYS AS HIGHLY LITERATE PARENTS.

- THE EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT AND SUCCESS OF ONE GENERATION IS DIRECTLY RELATED TO THE EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT AND SUCCESS OF THE NEXT GENERATION. EDUCATION AND POVERTY REPORTED THAT TWO ADDITIONAL YEARS OF EDUCATION BY PARENTS RESULTS IN 1.1 ADDITIONAL YEARS OF EDUCATION FOR EACH CHILD OF THOSE PARENTS. AND FUNCTIONAL ILLITERATE ADULTS CANNOT ADEQUATELY HELP THEIR CHILDREN WITH HOMEWORK--A DESIRE OF PARENTS COMMITTED TO THEIR CHILD'S FUTURE.

- AS THE NATION BECOMES MORE INVOLVED IN THE INFORMATION AGE AND TECHNOLOGY, FUNCTIONAL LITERACY REQUIREMENTS WILL INCREASE.

- AS THE NATION FOCUSES ON EDUCATION, IT IS IMPORTANT TO IMPROVE THE INTERFACING AND COORDINATION BETWEEN THE VARIOUS EDUCATIONAL SUB-SYSTEMS SUCH AS BETWEEN SECONDARY SPECIAL AND GENERAL EDUCATION AND ADULT/VOCATIONAL/REHABILITATION EDUCATION AND TRAINING.

- ALL STUDENTS DESERVE A QUALITY EDUCATION--INCLUDING ADULT STUDENTS.

WE BELIEVE THAT THE FORUM WILL HELP ADDRESS THE PUSH-OUT, DROP-OUT PROBLEM AND COULD LEAD TO REFORM WHICH WILL DECREASE THE NUMBERS ENTERING THE POOL OF FUNCTIONALLY ILLITERATE YOUTH. THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION IS ESTABLISHING A FEDERAL EMPLOYEE LITERACY TRAINING PROGRAM UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE FEDERAL INTERAGENCY COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION TO PROVIDE A CADRE OF FEDERAL EMPLOYEE LITERACY VOLUNTEERS AND TO MAKE SPACE AVAILABLE FOR LITERACY TUTORING.

THIS PROGRAM (FELT) IS PROCEEDING. THE S.R.R.'S WILL BE ASKED TO TAKE THE LEADERSHIP IN CONVENING MEETINGS WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF OTHER FEDERAL DEPARTMENTS TO DISCUSS THE PROGRAM. THEY WILL ALSO BE ASKED TO WORK CLOSELY WITH THE CHIEF STATE SCHOOL OFFICERS, STATE DIRECTORS OF ADULT

EDUCATION AND NONPROFIT LITERACY GROUPS IN EACH REGION SINCE THE FELT PROGRAM VOLUNTEERS AND SPACE ALLOCATIONS WILL BE PROVIDED TO COMMUNITY PROGRAMS WHO WISH TO UTILIZE THEM.

THE DEPARTMENT IS ESTABLISHING LIAISON WITH VOLUNTEER AND SERVICE GROUPS IN AN ONGOING FIELD OUTREACH-INPUT SYSTEM.

SINCE WE CONTINUE TO FEEL STRONGLY THAT THE SUCCESS OF THE INITIATIVE DEPENDS ON OUR ABILITY TO WORK CLOSELY WITH STATE-ADMINISTERED AND VOLUNTEER PROGRAMS, WE ARE IN THE PROCESS OF DEVELOPING TELECOMMUNICATIONS CAPABILITIES SO THAT WE CAN INTERACT REGULARLY AND FREQUENTLY WITH THE NETWORK OF AGENCIES, PROGRAMS AND GROUPS. WE WILL DEVELOP A COMPUTER TELECONFERENCING NETWORK AND AN ELETRONIC MAIL SYSTEM. WE WILL SEND ADDITIONAL INFORMATION WHEN WE HAVE THE SYSTEM OPERATIONAL IN CASE YOU WANT TO GET "ON-LINE" WITH US. IF YOU HAVE OPINIONS ABOUT THE BEST SYSTEM FOR US TO USE, PLEASE LET US KNOW.

ALL OF THE INITIATIVE WILL BE CONDUCTED IN CLOSE COOPERATION WITH:

- FEDERALLY-FUNDED ADULT EDUCATION PROGRAMS IN THE STATES
- VOLUNTEER LITERACY PROGRAMS
- BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY
- SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS; AND
- CHURCH GROUPS

THE WHITE HOUSE OFFICE OF PRIVATE SECTOR INITIATIVES AND THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION IS WORKING CLOSELY WITH BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY TO DEVELOP PRIVATE/PUBLIC SECTOR PARTNERSHIPS IN THE AREA OF ADULT LITERACY PROMOTION. WE ARE ATTEMPTING TO COLLECT A LIST OF BUSINESSES AND INDUSTRIES INTERESTED IN LITERACY. YOU COULD HELP US GREATLY BY LETTING US KNOW OF SUCH CORPORATIONS AND HOW THEY ARE INVOLVED. WE WOULD APPRECIATE IT IF YOU WOULD

INFORM US OF ANY CORPORATIONS (INCLUDING THE NAME OF A CONTACT PERSON) WHICH YOU FEEL ARE INTERESTED IN FURTHER INVOLVEMENT WITH LITERACY, OR ANY CORPORATIONS WHICH YOU FEEL DESERVES RECOGNITION OR COMMENDATION FOR THEIR EFFORTS.

SOME EXCITING NEW DEVELOPMENTS WILL BE ANNOUNCED IN THE NEXT FEW MONTHS, WHICH WILL SERVE AS AN INDICATION OF THE INTEREST AND CONCERN OF BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY IN THIS PROBLEM. THERE ARE SEVERAL EXAMPLE OF THESE COOPERATIVE EFFORTS. WE ARE ALSO ATTEMPTING TO GATHER COPIES OF LITERACY DOCUMENTARIES, FILMS, AND TAPES. IF YOU KNOW OF ANY, PLEASE LET US KNOW HOW WE COULD GET COPIES. WE WILL ALSO DISTRIBUTE A LIST OF THESE A-V MATERIALS TO YOU WHEN IT IS COMPLETED.

WE ARE ALSO INTERESTED IN DEVELOPING A BANK OF ARTICLES AND CLIPPINGS SO THAT THEY CAN BE PROVIDED TO OTHERS AS NEEDED.

THERE ARE SEVERAL OTHER IDEAS WHICH NEED FURTHER EXPLORATION. ONE IS THE NOTION OF DEVELOPING A PROPOSAL FOR JUDGES ON ALTERNATIVE SERVICE IN LITERACY--EITHER IN OR OUT OF CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES. SINCE CHIEF JUSTICE WARREN BURGER HAS TAKEN AN INTEREST IN ADULT FUNCTIONAL LITERACY, SERVICE IN LITERACY AS AN ALTERNATIVE TO PRISON MAY BE A VIABLE WAY OF EXPANDING THE POOL OF RESOURCES.

ALSO, WE HOPE TO WORK MORE CLOSELY WITH THE DEPARTMENTS OF LABOR AND JUSTICE IN COORDINATING EFFORTS IN JOB TRAINING PROGRAMS AND IN CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES.

I'M SURE YOU REALIZE, THERE ARE MANY MORE ITEMS ON OUR AGENDA, BUT THIS SAMPLING SHOULD INDICATE THE ENERGY, COMMITMENT AND CREATIVITY WE INTEND TO APPLY TO THIS JOB.

AS PRESIDENT REAGAN SAID ON SEPTEMBER 7:

"LET US TODAY RESOLVE TO ROLL UP OUR SLEEVES AND GET TO WORK, BECAUSE THERE'S VERY MUCH TO BE DONE. ACROSS THIS GREAT LAND, LET THOSE OF US WHO CAN READ TEACH THOSE WHO CANNOT. LET THE LIGHTS BURN LATE IN OUR CLASSROOMS, OUR CHURCH BASEMENTS, OUR LIBRARIES AND AROUND OUR KITCHEN TABLES, WHEREVER WE CAN GATHER TO HELP OTHERS HELP THEMSELVES TO THE AMERICAN DREAM."

I APPRECIATE ALL THAT YOU'VE ALREADY DONE, BUT TODAY I'M ASKING YOU FOR MORE. TOGETHER, WE CAN ROUSE THE SPIRIT OF OUR PEOPLE AND APPLY OUR ENORMOUS NATIONAL WILL TO THE TASK AT HAND. IF WE SUCCEED, WE WILL HAVE COME AN IMPORTANT STEP CLOSER TO MAKING AMERICA AN EVEN GREATER NATION.